

DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #110!

We here at the DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW were noticing how much 1999 kicks 1998's ass fifteen ways to Sunday in the Match Of The Year region. Schneider and I were talking on the phone and he reeled off ten matches better than the Tenryu vs Hashimoto match that he and I considered the match of the year for 1998 (Magnum Tokyo vs Sasuke, Them Ogawa tag matches, Benoit vs Bret Hart pre-Russo, Misawa vs Kawada Arm broke match, Misawa vs Kobashi in the Misawa's Sweet Ass match, Honma vs Yamakawa, Ikeda vs Otsuka). There are TWO more in this DVDVR- your DVDVR #110- with the Ikeda/ Ishikawa and the mega-GREAT Aja Kong vs Meiko Satomura match- which was my match of the year before I saw the AMAZING Ikeda vs Ishikawa match. It's nice not having to settle with a match that barely scraped into the greatness realm. It's also nice that there will be a wide ranging debate over what is the Match of the Year with so many to choose from- as opposed to last years Kousaka vs Tamura or Hash vs Tenryu schools of thought.

We'd also like to welcome aboard young Anthony Gancarski- a man whom we have been meaning to make a Playah for a couple of years now but circumstances had always gotten in the way. Finally the time is right and things have fallen into place so we have luckily added his vast skills of analyzing the art called Pro Wrestling to our already impressive Murderer's Row of hardcore motherfucking wrestling fans. Welcome, Fat Tony. Long may you ride....

And Naimark brings the shootstyle frothing goodness and his strange need to vent, The Ripper is all about the All Japan Handheld from 1992 what with Doug Furnas' tiny pants, and Pete gets misty for Heisin Inshingin (hoo-boy, my spelling...) on your sweet ass, but first- SCHNEIDERRRRRR...

@#@#@#@#@# GAEA G-PANIC! 10/15/99
(Phil Schneider)

This was the second super show for GAEA this year, and was a little disappointing compared to the DOPE 4/4 show. Still it did feature some good stuff, and a legit Match of the Year candidate so disappointing is sort of a relative term when you are talking about the greatness that is GAEA.

Sonoko Kato v. Toshie Uematsu: The new evil Sonoko makes me feel funny. This match was pretty great as Sonoko has stepped up her game and is now a legitimate Kawada to Meiko Satomura's Misawa. Uematsu is kind of Kikiuchi if I am to beat this metaphor to death (Nagashima is a sounder Kobashi, Sato is Taue). She is sort of undersized, and while being a good worker tends to get smoked by her peers. Sonoko attempted the million counter finish that she is so good at, but she seemed to have to dumb it down a bit for Uematsu. The match had a bunch of heat, and Uematsu was all fired up, to punish the traitor, and that whole bit was pretty great. Darn good opener but not transcendent or anything.

RIE v. Kaori Nakayama: This was FMW style and resembled most of their crappy non-Combat/Kudo women's matches: Some blood, some chairs, a chain, blah blah. RIE wins and proves her evilness or something. I suppose I would rather watch this kind of match, then a straight wrestling match between these two sucksters, but it still wasn't much to write home about.

Devil Masami v. Super Heel Sakura Hirota: Not really a comedy match, because it wasn't funny. Hirota does all these imitations and Masami was someone she imitated. It was sort of like if Rich Little had to fight Nixon, and it was probably about as entertaining.

Team Nostradamus (Akira Hokuto + Mayumi Ozaki) v. Las Caraches Orientales (Mima Shimoda + Etsuko Mita): Boy this stunk. The Public Enemy of Joshie Puroresu (You know how great PE looked when you first got ECW TV, and how as the weeks went on they got progressively crappier,) Mima Mim Shimoda and Etsuko Grunge, have another in a series of listless crappy brawls. It's fucking Akira Hokuto and Mayumi Ozaki, and you can't get off your ass, this has arguably two of the greatest workers in Women's Wrestling history, and it was barely better than the fucking RIE match. Same basic formula, with LCO busting out their lame double teams i.e. the rail ride, the chair crap and a some double chokeslam which they completely blow, while Akira Hokuto bleeds a lot. Akira and Mayumi get the big win which hopefully exits LCO out of GAEA for good, off to JÖD or LLPW or Neo Ladies so I have to watch you no more.

Kaoru + Toshiya Yamada v. Chiyako Nagashima + Sugar Sato: This match was pretty boss, although it fell short of what it could have been. GAEA clipped this match and we start with the highspots, KAORU hits a big moonsault off the scaffolding, which wastes her partner, setting Yamada up for a Nagashima top rope double stomp to the floor, which was a nasty impact for such an oldster to take. The cruel and unforgiving GAEA editors then move to the finishing sequence which is where I think the real flaw in this match lays. Chiyako Nagashima may not get the hype that Kato and Satamura get, but she is becoming every bit their equal, much like a hot and sexy Danny Kroffat she is a master of working complex and exciting finishing sequences, KAORU and Nagashima worked this great series, where the each kept countering out finisher attempts with cross armbreakers, it looked really great and would have made a hot finish for the match. After that series, KAORU and Yamada attempted some sort of double team superplex, which they take too long to set up, and completely blow, it totally killed the heat of the finish. Then instead of letting Nagashima work another counter sequence with KAORU, they have Sugar Sato do a crappy New Japan multi uraken finish (i.e., she hits KAORU with 37 urakens with the 38th knocking her out) It was a **** match with a * finish, and didn't really live up to it's early promise.

Aja Kong v. Meiko Satomura: The undying All Japan Metaphor continues, as Aja and Meiko do Jumbo and Mitsuhara 2K. (This idea was originally postulated by fellow Playa Dean Rasmussen) Aja plays pissed off cranky veteran to the hilt as she is filled with hate for the spunky Satomura. Aja just beats the dimples off

Meiko in the first part of the match, really laying in the kicks and forearms. Aja even busts out the worlds greatest tope and just flattens Satamura who takes it full force with out the usual wall of trainees to cushion the fall. Most of Meiko's combacks were of the flash variety, like when she turned Aja's top rope back elbow into a cross arm-breaker or KO'ing Aja with her flip kick. However unlike other big stars of Joshie, Meiko would actually sell the previous beating, instead of just leaping back into offense. The selling was what made this match so great, my favorite spot of this match has Aja going over and slapping on a sleeper hold, shortly after being in the cross-armbreaker, but having to break the hold because her arm is too hurt, that boys and girls is professional wrestling. The built to the super hot ending, with the crowd going ballistic for every near fall, as Meiko and Aja exchanged big moves in a heated and realistic manner, incomprehensibly great match, the best in the history of GAEA and one of the best women's matches ever.

Lioness Aska v. Chigusa Nagayo: This was the biggest match on the biggest Joshie Puroresu card in the last 3 or so years, and ended up being another disappointment. Women's Wrestling in Japan had really hit the skids when the Matsunaga brothers spent AJW into the toilet. You had a bunch of vanity leagues drawing flies, and a bad economy looked like it was going to kill Joshie for good, Chigusa started the SSU angle and got fans excited about Women's wrestling again and this match was the big blowoff of that awesome feud. Aska and Nagayo are the two most senior non-Devil workers in Joshie and thus while you might not be able to expect them to perform physically at the level of the younger workers, you would hope they would able to put together a compelling match using psychology (kind of like the way Ric Flair is wrestling ***1/2 house show matches on the most recent WCW tour.) Shockingly what we had was a match chock full of monster bumps and dangerous moves, but severely flawed in basic comprehensible match psychology. The match begins with four huge table spots (Including a firemans carry drop off the entranceway onto an unbroken table which looked totally kidney destroying), and then they moves directly into a knuckle lock- WTF? The whole thing just felt off, the end had Chigusa absorbing a big beating and then winning with a fireball, a move which was lame and out of nowhere. This wasn't even close to the matches Lioness produced with Kyoko Inoue, and Chigusa seems in better shape and has a supposedly better grasp of what makes a wrestling match. To it's credit the crowd was rabidly hot for this match, and both women took some big bumps, but it resembled nothing if not a WWF main even, with the big table bumps and blood replacing actual wrestling. If an elderly Vince McMahon can perform in matches like this how challenging can they be.

!@!@!@!@! ALL JAPAN HANDHELD (11/30/90)
(PHIL RIPPA)

Mr. Lynch delivered the goods and I continue to yammer on about late 1990 All Japan.

Masa Fuchi/Yoshinari Ogawa vs. Tsuyoshi Kikuchi/Isamu Teranishi: The match was kinda there. There was some wrestling which we have all seen done by better wrestlers. In a big surprise

Kikuchi gets beat on for about 70% of the match. He then does the job to a Thesz press. This match went about 15 minutes but the mental clock in my head had it at about 4 hours.

Kenta Kobashi/Johnny Ace vs. Giant Warrior/Nitron: Kobashi is left out of the white man's "Giant Mullet Contest". I feel like I should know both Warrior and Nitron but I can't place either one of them right now. Match is really poopy as Kobashi spends a lot more time on the outside while the white stiff exposes the business. It was soooooo a North American Heavyweight matchup. Lots of chinlocks, shoulder blocks, KICKS OF FEAR and other nonsense. Ace wins with an elbow smash from the top rope.

Abdullah the Butcher/Kimala II vs. Haruka Eigen/Motoshi Okuma: Number of people in this match who need a manzier - 4.

Dynamite Kid/Johnny Smith vs. Doug Furnas/Ricky Santana: Was Phil LaFon too busy sitting on the Almighty Throne trying to pass a couple of dime bags that he couldn't have wrestled? For some reason, I remember Santana being better than what he should be in this match. In fact, everyone mails it in during the match. Well I shouldn't say that. Dynamite is a shell of his former self but he does the best he can. See the problem lies with the fact that Furnas and Santana aren't, say, the Malenko boys. Whereas Dean and Joe bust out all the elaborate and freaky matwork that allow Smith and Dynamite to look good without too much effort, Furnas' dropkick and Santana's armbar ain't gonna cut the mustard. Ending also comes out of nowhere which didn't make things easier to swallow.

Steve Williams/Terry Gordy vs. Rusher Kimura/Mighty Inoue: Well..... ummm..... ahhhh..... I'm sure that Kimura and Inoue are fine chaps but they are ancient. And this is 1990!!!! Gordy is well on the way to giving up the ghost and he isn't shoot punching Mick Foley so he does nothing in this match. Lots of stalling and chinlocks abound as Williams and Gordy drag about 13 minutes of wrestling out of the elders. Williams wins with a lackluster Oklahoma Stampede. Kimura gets on the House STICK and cracks a few jokes to the delight of the crowd. The second viewing put me to sleep so there was really no point to the match.

Mitsuharu Misawa/Toshiaki Kawada vs. Dick Slater/Joel Deaton: Ricky Misawa and Robbie Kawada drive the ladies crazy with their good looks and stoicism. I haven't seen Deaton in forever so this will be interesting. For some bizarre reason, both teams take turns playing the subtle heels but soon enough Slater and Deaton immerse themselves in their proper roles. This match is really fun and it is chock full all sorts of things that make you remember why you are a wrestling fan. The Texans come out to the theme from Raiders of the Lost Ark and Deaton even cracks his bullwhip in time. There are lots of partner saves including the ever popular lay across the turnbuckle to protect your teammate spot. There are two distinct portions of the match as Kawada/Misawa work over Deaton's arm and the Texans work over Kawada's back. All of it is old schoolerific and spiffy. Slater takes Misawa's forearm smashes like a man while Deaton lets Kawada blast him in the face a few times. There is really only one blown spot as Misawa rotates too soon on a neckbreaker so it looks like Dirty Dick's Dirty Pits knocked him down. Otherwise, best match of the night.

Andre The Giant/Giant Baba vs. Dory & Terry Funk: The match stinks. Come on. Baba and Andre in 1990. STINK!!!! The only thing that needs to be said is that this is the match where Baba breaks his leg. He and Dory tumble over the top rope and Baba never gets back up. Of course, this takes place on the side of the ring completely opposite from the guy who is doing the handheld. I don't know how badly it was broken. I am amazed that it didn't happen earlier in his career because I remember the first time I ever saw Baba I thought "Jesus, how do his legs not break just from standing."

Jumbo Tsurta/Akira Taue vs. Stan Hansen/Danny Spivey: It is the return of AKIRA FONZIETAUE!!!!!!!!!!!! Taue was sooooo not afraid to have a hairdo straight out of an ABC 70s sitcom. Spivey, as per usual, is a late entrant into the mullet contest. Some unknown person or persons pissed in Hansen's whiskey before the match because he is all ornery and he takes it out on Taue. The big tease of the match is the Tsurta/Hansen matchup. So they spend 11 minutes building to it. That means 11 minutes of Spivey's pedestrian offense and comical attempts to sell. There is even a point where Taue sells a clothesline even though all it did was wipe some of the mousse off the top of his head. Now is the part of the match I don't understand. Jumbo finally gets into the ring with Hansen. He hits an elbow and the tags the exhausted Taue back in. One lariat later and the match is over. I just don't understand. Oh well.

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NAIMARK'S THING OF SHOOTSTUFF

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Greetings fight fans, and welcome to another edition of the Death Valley Driver Video Review, your online aphrodesiac of ass-kicking. Now that you've heard the melodious tones of our own Al Green~!, Diamond Dean, hunker down and get a facefull of mixed martial-arts mayhem from your Barry White~! of the shootfight. And today's theme will be, 'It's Ecstasy When You Beat the Shit Out of Me', live from the New Daisy Theatre on Historic Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee, as some local promoter offers residents of the Banjo Belt a chance to see real-live MMA up close and personal last month! 2 kickboxing matches, 1 muay-thai match, and 3 Pancrase-style shootfights featuring the best talent they could find at the local juke joints and Hick-Fu-Do dojos! I may have gotten some of the names misspelled, so if you fought that night and are reading this, GET A BETTER INSTRUCTOR. Let's go to the ring with your host, 'The Tennessee Stud', ME, Mike Naimark!

1st match - Hector Cardon v Alex White - This is a kickboxing match, both guys around the lightweight level in size (~175lbs). You know why I hate kickboxing? Because head kicks are damn near useless, leg kicks aren't emphasized in their training, and it all comes down to who has better boxing skills. This match was no exception, and had the added bonus of White's embarrassment when he went for one of those flashy Van Dam headkicks, missed, and ended up on his butt with a pair of red cheeks for his embarrassment. The match has little serious contact; although both competitors seem to be in good shape and have adequate

stamina, they seem reluctant to expose themselves to the counterattack, and we have a dull, unimaginative fight. Cardon wins the 3-rd decision, but I'd rule it a draw. WINNER via DECISION, Hector Cardon!

2nd match - Ronnie Crenner (Cramer?) v Frank Seaton - Our second kickboxing bout of the night, featuring two legit heavyweights. Seaton is the larger of the two, probably close to 240lbs with a physique that makes me think I could be out there tonight (think Kevin Rozier). And then, about 50 seconds into the fight, he clobbers his opponent with a wild, toughman-esque right hook, followed by a flailing left as he crumples to the ground. I think Crenner could have gotten up if he really wanted to, but he just didn't want to. Winner via KO in about a minute, FLABBY FRANK SEATON!

3rd match - Terry O'Ty Mullersman v Ike Austin - No, not THAT Ike Austin, the NBA center. In fact, I'd bet good money that this guy's last name isn't really "Austin" at all, to judge by his shaven head and trimmed Van Dyke beard. Who you trying to kid, knucklehead? This is the lone Muay-Thai match of the night, which I looked forward to with great anticipation, 'cause I'm a sucker for that brutal infighting. This match doesn't disappoint, with whip kicks galore in the first round and a couple of nice rushes by Baldo Austin. Both men are too fresh for any really brutal infighting in the first round, but they're quick and determined, and I like that. Second round sees the pace slow down marginally, but less dancing equals more slugging. Austin backs Mullersman to the ropes and grabs the dreaded Muay-Thai neck-vice for some serious kneestrikes, but Mullersman deftly blocks most of the impacts with his crossed arms and knees. Still, the round ends with Austin pressing the attack and Mullersman defending well; if you're the kind of judge that gives bonus points for "aggressiveness", then you'd have to give Austin the nod. Early in the third round Austin overextends himself on a missed whip kick and gets cracked with a nifty counter left as he spins around. Mullersman goes on the offensive to follow up, but is unable to gain any advantage over the backpeddling Austin. Both men receive a loud ovation from the crowd of rubes when the bell rings at the end of the round, and in an uncharacteristic show of common sense from the judges, the bout is ruled a draw. Excellent effort from both men.

4th match - Ed Levinski (?) v Kenny Williams - Levinski represents TKD, I think, while Williams represents wrestling. As would be expected, Williams gets the early shoot and takedown; when will these dojo queens ever learn? You can get UFC tapes at Blockbuster, for crissake! Anyhoo, it's some ground-n-pound, but for a TKD chump Ed hangs in there ok. He uses his guard like Mo Smith against Mark Coleman, basically unbalancing the wrestler when he rears back to punch, but lacking any semblance of a ground-based submission game. Sadly, Big Ed is no Mo Smith, and ends up absorbing some hefty shots to the face before the round expires. The next round has Levinski on his bicycle early, keeping his distance without offering any significant offense. This continues for about a minute, with the crowd booing roundly. Finally he makes a move and they grapple standing, with the stubbier Williams driving his opponent to the ropes before ripping his legs out and scoring the takedown for, guess what, some more ground-n-pound. Williams actually gets his punches tangled in the ropes a few times, but nonetheless manages a solid drubbing of his opponent. This round ends much like the first,

with the wrestler scoring on the striker from the guard. The final round begins with a roaring charge from Williams which almost sends him into the crowd as Levinski steps out of danger. Levinski lands his first solid blow of the night, a swift front kick that knocks Williams on his heel, but doesn't follow up. Williams ties up his opponent, and nothing of note happens until the time expires. The listlessness of the ending sucked all the enthusiasm out of the crowd, and Williams is booed as he is announced as the winner.

5th match - Kenny Smith v "Babyface" Bill Boyd - Hey, that kid really IS a classic babyface! He sorta looks like the Howdy Doody Bob Backlund that robbed the greatest wrestler of the 1970's, SUPERSTAR GRAHAM, of his WWWF World title in Baltimore on that infamous night in 1978. Bob Backlund, that most benign-looking athletic fantasy of white-bread Americana, ROBBED Superstar Billy Graham of his World Title as surely as Dana Plato ROBBED a crappy video store in Las Vegas! Your feet were on the ropes, you sanctimonious fuck. YOUR FEET WERE ON THE FUCKING ROPES! The longest and most historic heel World Title run in the history of the WWF, and you waltz into Baltimore with your "Gee whiz" interviews and squeaky-clean ears, and con the public into buying in to this bogus charade of DECENCY and HONOR and giving you a shot against the LEGEND that was Superstar Graham. And what do you do with you big chance, Boob Backlund? Walking the aisle like you're some pubescent wonderboy, still above the cheap shot, the shortcut, the coward's way out? You let DICK KROLL, a KNOWN Sammartino relative who changed his name from Dick Krollino when he moved to America from Sicily, make the wretched three count with your feet on the ropes for illegal leverage! YOU STOLE THE TITLE, and I'll never be able to forgive you for that. All those great matches you had didn't remove the tarnish of your bogus status as champion. Your saccharine smile and healthy gums can't detract from the fact that Superstar Graham was brutally assaulted in the ring by you and a scungili-breathed Sammartino stooge, and thousands of fans were witness to your truly dispicable and craven character, black to the damnable core beneath that lily-white exterior. On the Day of Judgement I have no doubt that YOU WILL GO STRAIGHT TO HELL IN A BUCKET and rejoin the late Krollino, consigned to oil Hulk Hogan's bloated muscles for all eternity. Bob Fuckin' Backlund can kiss my rootie-poo candy ass. Boyd wins by a choke. Fuck you, Bob Backlund.

6th match - Eric "The Bull" Waters v Reggie Taylor - One of these guys is announced as having 27 fights, significantly more than anyone else announced on the card, earning a solid 22-5 record. Curiously, I spent most of the fight with the two men's names reversed, just because I thought one really looked like a "Reggie". Two sizable guys, Waters sorta looked like Ice Train, Taylor was lankier. They go to the ground immediately, with Taylor going from an armbar from the guard in a flash. Waters powers out of the submission attempt and briefly has half-guard before clipping back to full guard. You know why Backlund had to use that illegal pin to beat Superstar Graham? Because every wrestling fan in the UNIVERSE knew that Backlund's regular finisher, the chicken wing crossface, could no more injure The Superstar's massive arm than a turd in a singlet could stop a speeding train. Graham's power was mythical; even Sammartino and Patera were in awe of his seemingly limitless strength. <AHM> The fight gets nicely technical here, with the stronger Waters trying to pass the guard, and Reggie pivoting like mad to keep his butt between his opponent and himself. To his credit,

Waters doesn't blow his wad with wasted motion; unlike the earlier fights, you can see he's comfortable in this position. He finally powers to the side mount from his wrestling base, but the time expires to end the first period before he can take advantage of the position. Between rounds a hellaciously ugly girl holding a sign for a local sponsor parades around the ring in a bikini. Clearly the perils of smoking crack hadn't eroded her figure yet, but her face showed the kind of roadwork I usually associated with the backroads of Louisiana. Back to the ring and they exchange standing strikes, with Taylor even landing a flashy kick before clinching up against the ropes. Waters drags the fight to the ground again, and this time takes side mount immediately about 30 seconds into the match. He hurls some stiff punches, with more landing than I'd care to take. Taylor rolls and gives up his back in the "turtle" position with Walters locked around his waist, and you can see that Waters would REALLY like to back "plex" him, but that ain't gonna happen against a veteran grappler. They end up back on their feet and the crowd erupts with cheers for the excellent effort put forth by both men. On the standup, Water's lunges with a hard right cross, catching his opponent off-guard and scoring heavily on the left orbital area. Our first blood of the night! Everybody drinks! Taylor is hurt! Waters flurries and scores, but can't resist the urge to grab the smaller Taylor when they get in close and drag him to the ground. On his back, Taylor quickly recoups and gets guard, landing some annoying palm strikes as Waters curses himself for not staying on his feet. Lil' Reggie holds on until the end of the round. Between rounds, I can see from my seat that Taylor's left temple has an angry gash that's gonna need stitches. Low rent show like this, I could probably get my ticket free if I just bring my surgical tools and offer to do damage control. Taylor insists on continuing, so the 3rd round begins. Waters opens strong with a bull rush, overpowering Reg and backing him to the corner. Standing grapple, a surprisingly long time of inactivity in the corner until Water's smacks a short right. Taylor is bleeding again; this cut is in a very bad place along the orbital ridge, the kind of cut that can "run" if it isn't watched closely. I wasn't paying \$12 to see a guy's head get peeled like an orange. Taylor grabs Water's stump of a neck and wraps his legs around his waist, trying to drag him into the guard on the mat. Waters resists going down for a long time, but eventually sinks to his knees and powers his head free. Both men are breathing heavily, and Taylor's lucky to have his guard as well-positioned as he does. As the end of the round approaches, Lil Reggie hits a few wide punches from his back that looked pretty sharp from the cheap seats. Water's tries the old "mother with the gloves" bit, but that never works. As the bell rings, Waters take a LONG time to get up and go to the corner, while Taylor looks like he's been gored by a unicorn. I had sworn there were supposed to be 4 or 5 rounds in the last fight, but apparently not. The referee announces the decision - your winner is ERIC WATERS! The crowd has a mixed reaction, but both guys put out a helluva lot of effort and deserve praise for their sportsmanlike and dignified performance.

Sportsmanlike. Dignified. These words mean nothing to men such as Backlund. I pox on his freckled carcass.

\$\$\$\$\$ NEW JAPAN TV 3-4-95 ("2/12 KORAKUEN HALL DOCUMENT")
(POGO PETE STEIN)

This is the TV show I glossed over for DVDVR 100, and which I can now give a more deserving review to since Steve Pillmaier returned the tape to me. Not the greatest show they've ever done in terms of pure wrestling, but perhaps their most outrageous show ever in terms of booking and storylines. Just for reference this is the TV that was shot all in one day at two separate Korakuen Hall shows.

PART THE 1ST: HEISEI ISHINGUN AFTERNOON SHOW

Shiro Koshinaka has THE STICK! and uses it to call out some kid named Hiroyoshi Tenzan, back from Europe after ripping up the beefers in Catch. Koshinaka I guess wants to recruit Tenzan into HI, but Tenzan gives him the Mongolian chop and proceeds to take out Ohara for good measure. Hey, Pee-Wee Moore is the ref and he looks just as confused in Japan as he used to do in ECW! Ohara says "The NOIVE of dis character!" and picks up Tenzan's punk card for a match.

MICHIYOSHI "SLUGGO" OHARA vs. HIROYOSHI TENZAN: Ohara jumps Tenzan the second he hits the ring, but Tenzan decides that he ain't gonna sell for someone that looks even goofier than he does at this stage in his career. Ohara gets some scattered offense but this is essentially a squash for Tenzan, who eventually hits a Mountain Bomb and follows with a sidebuster for the pin at 7:53. Tenzan continues to work over Sluggo postmatch, which results in Koshinaka, Goto and Kabuki to run in and it's a 4-1 on Tenzan. This in turn leads to Masa Saito, Hirata and Yatsu heading out to even the sides, and just like that we've got our first-half main event.

2/3 FALLS- SHIRO KOSHINAKA/THE GREAT KABUKI/TATSUTOSHI GOTO vs. MASA SAITO/YOSHIAKI YATSU/JUNJI HIRATA: Much love shown to us by Asahi TV for clipping the match. Hirata takes the first fall with the Machine Suplex on Goto at 8:53. Goto evens things up with a backdrop on Yatsu for the pin at 5:30, and Team HI wins the match after Akitoshi Saito interferes behind the ref's back, kicking Hirata off the ropes to the floor where Kabuki and Goto give him a spike piledriver. He gets rolled back in and Koshinaka promptly gives him the Gentle Bomb for the decisive pin at 4:54. Masa shows his disgust for HI's actions by BODYSLAMMING all 7 of them in a row! BULLATHAWOODSEEFYAWHEEL! HI recovers from this goofiness and destroys Masa 7-1 until the save is made by Tenzan... and CHONO?!?! Tenzan further muddies the waters by going after Masa because he's a nice kid and all but really confused, and Chono offers to become the father figure he really needs. "HOI! JOIN ME MY SON AND WE SHALL RULE THE WORLD!"

Intermission! Tenzan and Chono yell cool-sounding shit at each other backstage! Koshinaka calls out Choshu over THE STICK! Choshu arrives and heads upstairs! The young NJ ref wanders by wearing one of them there new-fangled ECW shirts! Koshinaka and Choshu yell cool-sounding shit at each other backstage! Chairs are thrown! Otani and Yasuda hold both sides back single-handedly!

PART THE 2ND: NEW JAPAN EVENING SHOW

RIKI CHOSHU/SHINYA HASHIMOTO/JUNJI HIRATA vs. MASAHIRO CHONO/ HIROYOSHI TENZAN/ HIRO SAITO: Choshu immediately goes after Tenzan on the floor, posting him and clotheslining him right into the crowd since he's the mook who started this whole mess. It's great as Choshu is absolutely beating the shit out of him, never letting up even while he steps into the ring and Hashimoto passes Tenzan to him. Hash tags in and gets to lay in some kicks and a DDT, then Hirata uses his round to work over Tenzan. Choshu tags in and hits a pair of Riki Lariatos, but Chono sneaks in from behind and hits a kenka kick. Chono goes nuts on Choshu with kicks, which allows Tenzan to make his own comeback with Mongolian Chops. Everyone else starts brawling on the floor, which allows Hiro to sneak in and help Tenzan hit a spike piledriver on Choshu. Hiro slams Choshu, Tenzan heads up top and hits a diving headbutt on Choshu for the MEGA-UPSET pin at 5:35 without even getting tagged out! Tenzan celebrates like he just won the lottery, but it's short-lived as a livid Hash blindsides him with kicks and sends him into the crowd. Before long Hash and Hirata are halfway up the fucking BLEACHERS destroying Tenzan, but that allows Chono and Hiro to give Choshu a double-teaming of their own. Choshu soon revives and chairs Chono while Hash and Hirata resume their merry demolition of Tenzan back in the ring, but Chono steals the chair and gives Choshu a shot of his own while Murder Inc. affiliate Sabu hits the ring. Chono hands him a table, but rather than using it himself he instead lays Hash on top of it and allows Tenzan to put Hash through the table with a senton off the top. Sabu then proceeds to use what's left of the table on Hash until Hirata finally makes the save with a chair and drives the lot of them to the back. The crowd is going absolutely berzerk throughout the whole thing... the whole thing is that insanely hot.

Epilogue! Choshu yells cool-sounding shit! He throws chairs at Hash and Hirata, who leave wearing "Hoo boy, he's having one of *these* again..." looks and light out in search of Chono's locker-room! They find it! Schmozz ensues! Yasuda wanders around confused! Sabu mugs for the camera! Everyone yells cool-sounding shit at each other! Hash and Hase swear revenge! The End.

Overall a really cool show, like a more wrestling-intensive Raw with the SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT sacrificed for straight rassling angles and Godzilla-level heat and hatred. Choshu is just super in this the whole way...

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BATTLEARTS BATTLESATION ON SAMURAITV! 8/29/1999
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Y'know, BattleARTS is the best wrestling promotion in the world. When BattleARTS is on, it transcends all other arts in terms of true physicality and esoteric weirdness. This Battle Station has the best BattleARTS match ever in the history of the promotion and I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I AM MOTHERFUCKING STOKED THAT I CAN ALMOST SAY THAT SENTENCE WITH EVERY KNEW BATTLEARTS BATTLE STATION I GET. This is the Young Generation Battle 99 Tournament and it has an Ikeda vs Ishikawa Match that crushes everything in it's wake. Mohammed Yone vs Katsumi Usuda: Neither of these guys are great workers but both can be in great matches because of what they can do: Yone really takes a big beating and will die for your

pro wrestling pleasure, while Usuda really kicks like a mofo and looks credible on the mat. Neither can really put together a neat match by themselves so this is right in the middle of all BattlARTS as it goes into BattlARTS Default Matchplan Mode: "I'ma kick ya some, and then we'll do some submissions n stuff and then we'll take it home already." Yone does a slight change of the formula with his low-grade Pro Style Powermoves- the second rope guillotine legdrop, the goofy pump handle Falcon Arrow, what have you. Usuda kicks him some and hits a nice Released German Suplex and also does a superhurty looking Fujiwara Armbar variation. Yone gets a "big" lariat to set up a Half Crab and there you go- a wrestling match you just watched.

Yuki Ishikawa vs Carl Malenko: Malenko may suck at them legit shoot outings that he so foolishly gets wrangled into doing, but as a pro-style wrestler, he is DEEPLY coming into his own. The first part is basic generic UWF style matwork that Ishikawa makes fun by punching the fudge out of Malenko- mostly in the ribs, sometimes right in the motherfucking face to get me all tickled- to set up assorted submissions. The second part of the match is where all the superfun stuff kicks in- as Malenko goes into a big foray into preposterous submissions- with my fave being this super cool WAR Special Full-Nelson Choke thing that was all kindsa elaborate and freaked-out. Ishikawa makes it to the ropes and supplies his own Great Malenko-trained tangly submissions and the fun continues. Before this becomes a really great match, Ishikawa gets the submission. The cool thing about this match is that there is this one section where Ishikawa pretty much says, "Hey Carl, you're a kick-boxer, you should do this thing where I slump in the corner and you just fucking NAIL my in the face until my face gets all puffy." And they do it, and Ishikawa still has to wrestle Ikeda in the tournament final and has enough left to have the MOTY. Ishikawa is all kindsa good and all kindsa tough.

Takeshi Ono vs Alexander Otsuka: This was really good from what they showed. Otsuka continues to be the weirdest wrestler in Japan as he goes all Post-Modern with his haphazard style mixture. Here, he is all about the Pro Style with the rope-running and NASTY released Suplexes. The story of this short match is easy- If Otsuka gets a released Dragon Suplex on Takeshi, Punkboy is out for the count. With that as the basis, Otsuka tries to set him up and Ono tries to counter out of Otsuka's attempts and in-between Ono shows that he has been working on his striking because he hits some really fat ass shots- including a fabulous looking punch in the face that Otsuka takes like a KING. The ending is supergreat as Otsuka looks to finally get Ono up for the Dragon as a counter to a Lariat attempt gone awry but Ono does the big Lucha Rollthrough into a floatover into a Cross-Armbreaker THAT FREAKED ME OUT SO I PARTIED! so THUS the finish is SOOO Multi-stylistic as it takes a Strong-Style Lariat counters into a Strong-style Dragon Suplex Attempt into a lucha roll-up into a shootstyle Cross-armbreaker. BattlARTS! It's ZANY! SUP DEEP IN THE MANLY GOODNESS!

Daisuke Ikeda vs Minoru Tanaka: This was really short. Ikeda pulls one of his comical high-flying moves out of his keister as he does the Moe-like Moonsault to hilarious results. Fortunately, Ikeda saves the clipped- to -hell match by hitting the MOST EVILEST Brain-buster tha tYOU'VE EVER SEEN on your Minoru- killing him dead. WOO-HOO! A real 5 on the Koko Ware Beautiful Brainbuster Scale.

Mohammed Yone vs Carl Malenko: You can gauge a wrestler in BattlARTS by his Yone match some times. Malenko takes the empty vessel that is Yone and makes the match super neat by taking it straight to the early and staying there, hitting huge amounts of super-freaked-out pseudo submissions. His bizarre approximations of legit shootstyle and legit carny submissions are pretty glorious to behold. The weird-ass Crippler Crossface where he mutates it into a fucked-up Stretch Plum, the cool-ass Side Grapvine choke-out, the aforementioned WAR Special variation that he sets up with the Great Lost Dean/Joe Malenko Powermove- the Butterfly Underhook Face-buster on his knee that is 2 SWANK 2B B-lieved. It's all so fun, plus with the big kicks to Yone's face, you gotta love it. Yone gets the push to the top that is usually set aside for the Kensuke Sasaki of the world as he gets the Half Crab after hitting a Sasaki Lariat to advance him to the worst debacle in modern BattlARTS history. I welcome you to...

Daisuke Ikeda vs Mohammed Yone: This was quite the good little Ikeda-Carries-A-Lesser-Worker match for a minute there. Yone's offense isn't very impressive but Ikeda did what he could to lean into Yone's kicks to make them make that funtabulous smacking sound that really gets over the fact that- in BattlARTS, they really work motherfucking stiff. Ikeda was selling his kicks and submissions and making Yone look like an all-around champ and then- out of nowhere- IT ALL WENT WRONG. Yone foreshadows his Faux Pas early when he takes two lariats from Ikeda and sells them like Rick Steiner sells everything- kinda shaking his head like he is confused and grimacing because he can't figure out how to ACTUALLY sell it. Then Ikeda gets the SWANK Capture Suplex and YONE JUMPS RIGHT UP AND HITS A LARIAT! Like Pro Motherfucking Wrestling doesn't affect him! WOW! He then does the All-Japan stupid as shit Sell After The Lariat that Kenta Kobashi and Mitsuhashi Misawa are really not afraid to stink up their matches with. Yone fearlessly brings the shittiest aspect of Puroresu to BattlARTS- the last bastion of logic and selling in a no-selling universe- so take your evil elsewhere Yone, you bleach-blond suckass loser. Either way, Ikeda gets a Figure-Four and the win, while I await the next DVDVR 500 so I can knock 150 slots off somebody I lobbied like a mofo to get as high as he did. Ikeda was spectacular as usual, though.

Daisuke Ikeda vs Yuki Ishikawa: This is the best match in the history of BattlARTS and I'm pretty sure it's the best of 1999. Ikeda and Ishikawa have a decent string of great matches in a very short time and they always seem to be on the brink of really breaking through to the Classic Match status- but the closest they ever came to it was a time limit draw that was reaching too far for the structure of the match. This fixes all their little problems and brings forth the MegaMatch that YOU knew they had in them. The key to the match is that the main story is that both are going to stand in the middle of the ring and try to knock out the other FIRST and then if that isn't working, fight for the Brain-buster if you are Ikeda or the Cobra Twist if you are Ishikawa. The beauty of this is that you have the stiffest match off 1999 but it's the GOOD stiffness- stiffness that hurts like living hell but doesn't leave you crippled in two years. Psychology takes the place of highspots, the level of stiffness overshadows any forays they would ever have into spectacular neck-breaking, and the body of the match is standing face-to-face beating the living hell out of each other or going at it on the mat while beating each other to death. Ikeda and Ishikawa are kind of like how Eddie Gilbert described his feud with Cactus Jack in 1993 when

he spoke of he and Foley totally sacrificing their body for the match with wreckless adandon. The difference is that this BattlARTS match a better, standard basis to start from- where actual wrestling skill is added to the innate toughness of the competitors, as opposed to the Gilbert-Foley matches where the garbage spots were the main conduit of action. Those were great matches but they freak shows. Ikeda/Ishikawa is a great match because it is the pinnacle of what Pro Style Wrestling should be- something you and I can't do, something that takes will, and toughness, and skill and passion- it follows logic and the rules that it sets up for itself. That is this match and after all the lofty crap I've said about it, the REAL best part is that there are whole sequences where you go- "I cannot fucking believe he just took that kick right to the face." There are other parts where Ikeda will take GIANT straight rights to the face to sell Ishikawa's kneebar attempt that is beyond the scope of any worked wrestling. This is the pinnacle of worked wrestling in 1999. YOU SO VERY DEEPLY WANT ALL OF THIS.

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YOUR WRESTLER OF THE WEEK:

TED DIBIASE!!!

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PWF TAG-TEAM TITLE- STAN HANSEN/ TED DIBIASE vs. JUMBO TSURUTA/ TIGER MASK (All Japan 7-11-87): It's definitely cool watching Ted work in Japan in his prime, especially when you consider that it's basically a stiffer version of the style he used in the States before he went up north. This is a pretty good match, if not as hot or dramatic as it may have been in a larger joint like Budokan or Sumo Hall (couldn't figure out where this was being held). The finish comes when Jumbo launches Tigersawa off the top into a bodypress on Hansen, but Hansen rolls through as Jumbo heads back out and he has to dive back in to make the save. Ted takes out Jumbo with a clothesline and takes him to the floor while TM floors Hansen with the rolling savate. He hits the ropes but on the rebound Hansen absolutely VAPORIZES him with the Lariat for the pin and title switch. Good stuff, but the finish came out of nowhere... then again, the great thing about Hansen's Lariat was that he *could* hit it out of nowhere and it was a perfectly acceptable finish.

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Ted DiBiase & JYD V FreeBirds. GA. 1981.-(ANTHONY GANCARSKI):

The things that made Ted DiBiase special as a wrestler come through in sharp relief in this match, probably especially because we can see his offense for all of its quality especially on the backdrop of that of his partner. This is a pretty basic GCW main event. Gordy and Roberts are working for the Freebirds, with Hayes on the outside. Freebirds enter first, even though I hear Solie say something about them being the GCW tag champs. JYD comes in next to the Queen song, and then, Maivia-like, DiBiase enters the ring last. Basic technical stuff to start off. Ted exchanges armdrags, headscissors, and the like with the competent Roberts and Gordy, letting JYD draw heat and troll for narcotics on the apron. Gordy and DiBiase trade slams, establishing power. And then. JYD tags in. Katie Bar The Door. Standing side headlock for about a minute, and what makes you lose hope for humanity is the fact that he literally just stands here with it.

No wrenching. No selling of the move. Tags Ted in, and Ted takes JYD to school, showing him how to work the side headlock for all it's worth. Ted wrenched Gordy's head, moving the forearm up and down Terry's forehead to provide the illusion of discombobulation. Ted tags JYD back in, and JYD practically parodies Ted's headlock, jittering frantically as if his stash were on fire. No wonder no one went to JYD's funeral except for Buddy "40 Ounce" Landell. Still, give Ted credit for holding Gordy's heel in peril sequence together: the faces work the quick tags, and one has to wonder what connection the small, old-school GCW rings have to tag psychology. For about two minutes, neither man is in the ring for more than 20 seconds. The heels get on offense, and nothing noteworthy really happens until the hot tags. Then we get some drama. All four men are in the ring, and we're moving toward a finish. Dibiase powerslams Roberts with a crispness that is at once understated and realistic. Ted runs the ropes, but Hayes -- on the outside -- pulls the second rope down, and the trouper Dibiase tumbles out. Then we get into the territory of the Five-Star Finish (of what would've been a 2 1/2 * match). Gordy collects the collapsed heap of limbs and torso that is Ted DiBiase. With no ceremony at all, Gordy hits a piledriver outside the ring. A Ten Count ensues, and Dibiase is wallowing on the concrete. Possibly, he's wearing a crimson masque, though Solie makes no mention of it and my copy of this match (from an ancient JoMosh comp) is more shredded than Gerald Levert's jeans in the Casanova video.

The count rings on. Five . . . six . . . seven . . . Dibiase is . . . in at 8!

Gordy, nonetheless, presses his advantage. Piledriver in center ring as Solie reads the face's eulogy, but a two count only. Another piledriver. Another "near-fall". Yet another piledriver for two, and another. Before the fifth piledriver, Tommy Rich throws in a white towel and runs in, causing a pier-sixer and all the rest.

This wasn't a great match, and couldn't have been considering JYD was involved. This was however sports-entertainment, southern style. It got over the devastating Gordy piledriver while simultaneously establishing DiBiase as impervious to punishment. As opposed to today's schmozzes and hotshot angles, this match elevated two men -- Gordy and DiBiase -- through actual wrestling.

Ted DiBiase vs. Tito Santana- WWF- (PHIL RIPPA): I have a lot of really unwatchable WWF TV from the late 80s and it still took me forever to find a DiBiase match. Anyway, Million Dollar Man = Heat machine. DiBiase is completely and utterly hated by the rubes. By the time his done, he is having shit throw at him and fat women are screaming so much spittle is dripping down their necks. This is a big stall-a-thon and DiBiase does EVERYTHING in this match. That includes taking two dropkicks right in the kisser. DiBiase sure wasn't afraid to absurdly oversell something. Santana doesn't do much in this match except punch and wrench in a chinlock. I have seen better matches. The ending is cheap as Virgil exposes the business with some slaps and that brings Hercules out to make the save. Typical 10 minute match with screwy non-finish. I realized that when I was growing up I didn't truly appreciate the greatness of DiBiase as a wrestler. Of course, back then I hated him so he really was doing his job. Good for him.

Ted DiBiase vs Terry Taylor- MID-SOUTH- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): THIS WAS GREAT! Ted DiBiase puts up his ACTUAL North American belt against Terry Taylor's Comical TELEVISION TITLE MEDALLION! IT'S A MEDALLION! Don't that rock the world with it's funky beat,

-Jonathon Richman and the Modern Lovers.